

**Testimony of Cole Higlin, Public Policy Chair
North Dakota Recreation & Park Association
In Support of ARPA Funds for Park District Infrastructure
Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2021**

Chairman Delzer and Members of the Committee, my name is Cole Higlin, and I am the public policy chair of the North Dakota Recreation & Park Association (NDRPA). We represent more than 900 members, primarily park districts, and work to advance parks, recreation and conservation for an enhanced quality of life in North Dakota.

We are in support of ARPA funding to address our various infrastructure needs. Park districts are separate political subdivisions and separate taxing entities from cities, just like counties and school districts. We generate 50% of our revenue from programs and fees. The remaining portion comes from property taxes and state aid. We use these funding mechanisms for our infrastructure projects.

In March 2021, ARPA funds were awarded to cities and counties from the federal government. Park districts were not included. We are asking to be included with the funding from the state with a \$20 million one-time allocation to park districts based on percentage of population with the same requirements as cities and counties were required.

Park districts are an essential part of our communities and play a major role in the health, wellbeing and quality of life for North Dakotans and visitors.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for ARPA funding for park district infrastructure needs.